



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 9721 Executive Center Drive N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Phil Steele, or Phil.Steele@noaa.gov
727/570-5305, FAX 727/570-5583
<http://caldera.sero.nmfs.gov>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

August 15, 2002
NR02-045

GULF COUNCIL SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT ON SCOPE OF DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS TO BE DEVELOPED IN SUPPORT OF 1) PROPOSED AMENDMENT 13 TO THE GULF SHRIMP FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN AND 2) A RED SNAPPER REBUILDING PLAN

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) has scheduled a series of scoping meetings to seek public input in the preparation of two draft supplemental environmental impact statements (DSEISs). The first DSEIS will describe and analyze management alternatives associated with proposed Amendment 13 to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Shrimp Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico (Amendment 13). The second DSEIS will support the development of a red snapper rebuilding plan, which will be implemented through an amendment to the FMP for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico (Red Snapper Rebuilding Amendment).

The meetings will enable citizens to comment on the scope of issues and alternatives the Council will consider in the DSEIS associated with each amendment. Attendees will be encouraged to identify significant issues related to potential management alternatives. Because potential alternatives could have implications for both the red snapper and shrimp fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico, the scoping meetings for the two DSEISs will be held concurrently.

Proposed Amendment 13 to the Gulf Shrimp FMP

In addition to establishing stock status determination criteria for managed shrimp stocks in the Gulf, proposed Amendment 13 may consider management alternatives related to:

- 1) adding rock shrimp to the management unit of the shrimp FMP,
- 2) requiring endorsements for vessels harvesting rock shrimp and royal red shrimp in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the Gulf of Mexico,
- 3) requiring vessel monitoring systems aboard shrimp trawl vessels fishing in or transiting all or some portions of the Gulf of Mexico EEZ,
- 4) improving bycatch reporting, and
- 5) further reducing bycatch in the shrimp fishery.

Draft Red Snapper Rebuilding Amendment

The DSEIS developed to support the Red Snapper Rebuilding Amendment will:

- 1) evaluate biomass-based stock rebuilding targets and thresholds,
- 2) consider various rebuilding schedules that are consistent with Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requirements, and
- 3) evaluate alternatives to achieve the rebuilding goal based on a constant catch scenario and/or a constant fishing mortality rate scenario.

Schedule of Scoping Meetings

The schedule of scoping meetings on these two actions is as follows:

- Monday, August 26, 2002, Four Points Sheraton, 3777 North Expressway, Brownsville, Texas (956-547-1500);
- Tuesday, August 27, 2002, Palacios Recreation Center, 2401 Perryman, Palacios, Texas (361-972-2387);
- Wednesday, August 28, 2002, San Luis Resort, 5222 Seawall Boulevard, Galveston Island, Texas (409-744-1500);
- Monday, September 23, 2002, New Orleans Airport Hilton, 901 Airline Highway, Kenner, Louisiana (504-469-5000);
- Tuesday, September 24, 2002, Isle of Capri Casino Hotel, 151 Beach Boulevard, Biloxi, Mississippi (228-436-8720);
- Wednesday, September 25, 2002, Adams Mark Hotel, 64 South Water Street, Mobile, Alabama (251-438-4000);
- Tuesday, October 1, 2002, Franklin County Courthouse, 33 Market Street, Apalachicola, Florida (850-653-8861); and
- Wednesday, October 2, 2002, Tampa Airport Hilton, 2225 Lois Avenue, Tampa, Florida (813-877-6688).

All meetings will begin at 6:00 p.m. The first portion of each meeting will be allocated to taking public comments on the development of the DSEIS for proposed Amendment 13. Scoping for the DSEIS for the Draft Red Snapper Rebuilding Amendment will begin immediately thereafter. The meetings will be accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Peter Hood at the Council.

Written comments on the scope of issues the DSEISs should address and requests for additional information on the amendments should be sent to the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, The Commons at Rivergate, 3018 U.S. Highway 301 North, Suite 1000, Tampa,

Florida 33619; telephone: 813-228-2815; fax: 813-225-7015. Comments may also be sent via e-mail to Peter.Hood@gulfcouncil.org.

This and other news releases are available on the SERO homepage at <http://caldera.sero.nmfs.gov>. To obtain considerable recorded information about our missions, services, and management measures, call our toll free public service line at 1-866-570-5301. If the information you need is not available on that line, you can leave us a message and we'll get back to you within one business day.

NOAA Fisheries is an agency of the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.